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ABSTRACT

This presentation reports on a study of the participation of women in public school administrative positions for the St. Louis Metropolitan Area (1968-9 through 1975-6). While the numbers and percentages of women in administration generally increased, these findings need to be qualified. First, when the number of administrators increased, men increased more than women; and when administrators decreased, women decreased more than men. Second, most of the increase registered for women occurred in personnel/support positions (where men likewise increased, though to a lesser degree) rather than in positions of decision making and control (where women declined and men increased). (Author)

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THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Presented at the
1978 Annual Meeting of the
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ABSTRACT

"The Participation of Women in Public School Administration"

by
Philip Lesser

This paper reports a study of the participation of women in public school administrative positions for the Saint Louis Metropolitan Area (1968 to 1976). While the absolute number and percentage of women in administration increased, these findings need to be qualified.

First, most of the increase registered for women occurred in personnel/support positions (where men likewise increased, though to a lesser degree), rather than in positions of decision-making and control (where women declined and men increased).

Second, women administrators' salaries increased less than men's in similar positions; moreover, the percentage of salary paid to women administrators did not keep pace with women's increased presence in administrative positions (and in fact declined in certain positions).

Finally, a weak negative correlation was found between school district size and increases in percentages of women administrators, and a weak positive correlation was found between school district growth and percentages of women administrators.

While these findings merely describe trends in women's representation, and clearly are in need of further research, they do raise questions for civil rights advocates and educational policy planners regarding women's representation in school administration.

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The purpose of this paper is to report a study of the representation of women in public school district administrative positions in a large metropolitan area. While women's participation in school administration must be viewed in the context of increasing demands by civil rights advocates for greater participation in administrative/managerial positions by women in all sectors of our society, this research describes trends in a very specific population: the public school districts in the Saint Louis metropolitan area from 1968 through 1976. As this research represents a first pass through the data,[1] the intent is not to offer explanations; rather it is an attempt to describe what has occurred. The specific areas to be examined include changes in women's representation in administrative positions and changes in women administrators' salaries. In addition, women's representation in school districts of varying sizes and growth patterns will be discussed.

Background

It is common enough information that while women predominate American public school personnel, they are strikingly under-represented among administrators. According to United States Department of Labor information, 29% of school administrators are women (1975 Handbook on Women Workers, 1975). While compared to other social and economic sectors of society, education has offered women a better chance to advance into managerial/administrative

[1] Further analyses are underway (as will be discussed below) and comments would be greatly appreciated.

posts (in 1974, only 5% of managers and administrators in the United States were women), the situation in education nonetheless calls for remedy (1975 Handbook on Women Workers, 1975).

We are well into the second decade following the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which mandated that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), among other missions, eliminate discrimination based on sex. While faculty and administrators in education were explicitly excluded (the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 amended this situation), the movement to secure women's rights has become increasingly effective. The continuing debate over a 27th Amendment --- the Equal Rights Amendment --- and its ratification in numerous states attests to this strength. More germane to education, however, is Executive Order 11246 which prohibits discrimination by federal contractors on the grounds of sex (and other characteristics). Regulations issued by the Department of Labor compel contractors to remedy underutilization ("having fewer women or minorities in a particular job than would be reasonably expected by their availability") by nondiscrimination and affirmative action (Rumbarger, 1974, p. 209). While affirmative action (personnel policies requiring employers to seek minority applicants, rather than merely to desist from discriminatory practices) is a part of the higher education scene and is hotly debated (Gittell, 1975; Kanowitz, 1974; Rumbarger, 1974), public schools are not yet in a similar position; however, the potential for affirmative action is real, as is the potential for pressure by civil rights advocates for schools to account for personnel policies, such as the under-representation of women

in administrative positions. This study presents information in this area, as "Statistical evidence can serve as an important indicator of whether recruitment and hiring practice (as well as promotion and tenure policies) should be carefully examined for their possible exclusionary effect" (Rumbarger, 1974, p. 209).

What is the situation nation-wide? Reports are difficult to assess due to differing definitions of administrators (e.g., are guidance counselors defined as administrators?). However, some trends are noticeable: between 1970 and 1973 there appears to be a slight decrease nationally in the percentage of school administrators who are women.[2] This decrease would run counter to expectations based on the increasing strength of women's rights movements. Nonetheless, a recent study of elementary and secondary administrators in Illinois (between 1963 and 1975) reported decreases in women administrators (Burlingame, 1976).

An analysis of the public school districts in the Missouri portion of the Saint Louis Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area produced different findings. In 47 out of 51 school districts, the numbers of women administrators increased, and in 41 of those districts, the percentage of women administrators (as a percentage of total administrators) also increased. As shown in Table 1, the percentage of women administrators increased from

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INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

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[2] These figures for 1970 and 1973 are from, respectively, The Role and and Status of Women Workers in the United States and Japan (1970) and 1975 Handbook of Women Workers (1975).

TABLE 1

Women's Representation
in Public School District Administration
(Saint Louis Metropolitan Area: 1968-1976)

	Administrators (Total)	Administrators (Women)	Women as % Administrators	Ratio of Women to Men Administrators
1968	2170	738	34	.52
1976	2865	1303	45	.83
Change	695	565	11	.31
Net Change	32%	77%		

34% to 45% (an increase of 565 women), while the ratio of women to men administrators went from .52 to .83.

The point is not to take issue with Burlingame, for the two studies differ in terms of geographic area, years studied, number of school districts examined, and definitions of administrators; rather, it is to look at trends in another area in a slightly different way using his work as a starting place.

Questions to be investigated

1) What has been the change in various administrative positions held by women?

While the preliminary analysis indicated that the total administrative representation of women had increased, this question is designed to investigate the extent to which women's participation has been skewed away from superintendencies and other policy-making positions, as Sexton points out (1976). It is fairly common in the business world for women to advance into managerial ranks, yet be placed in personnel or support positions, as opposed to those of policy-making or control.

2) What has been the change in women administrators' salaries?

This question is designed to investigate whether advancement into administration is accompanied by more than a change in title and duties: women often earn less money for similar work as men, and the gap between men's and women's earnings has increased (from 56% to 75%) between 1955 and 1974 (The Earnings Gap Between Women and Men, 1976).

3) What is the relationship between women's participation in edu-

cational administration and school district growth?

This question will examine a phenomonon, noted by Hannaway (1977) and Freeman and Hannan (1975), that change in the size of a school district's administrative staff differs between growing and declining districts. In this case, the intent is to investigate the effects of school district growth upon women's representation in administrative ranks. Closely related to this issue is the question of school district size: What is the relationship of women's participation in administration and school district size?

Definitions

The study includes the public school districts (N = 51) in the Missouri portion of the Saint Louis Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (the counties of Saint Louis, Saint Charles, Jefferson, Franklin, and the City of Saint Louis). Administrators are defined as superintendents (including assistant superintendents, etc.), principals (including assistants), supervisors, librarians and media directors, guidance counselors, and pupil personnel. School district size is measured by student enrollment. The salaries of administrators are in dollars.

The primary source of data for this study (aside from enrollment figures drawn from the Missouri School Directory) is a file secured from the Missouri State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Residing on computer tapes, this file contains information on every certificated employee in the region, roughly 17,000 persons per year.

Results

1) What has been the change in various administrative positions held by women?

An examiniation of Table 2 shows that the term "administrator" must

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

be decomposed into its constituent parts. For example, while women superintendents increased by 2, women principals and supervisors decreased, respectively, by 44 and 21. Striking differences also exist in the increased numbers of librarians, guidance counselors, and pupil (127, 166, and 135) and the numbers of the previously mentioned categories. These figures show a strong growth in three positions (librarians, counselors, and pupil personnel) and minimal growth (and decline) in the other three categories (superintendents, principals, and supervisors).

Recalling the distinction raised earlier in this paper between positions of policy-making or control, and positions of personnel or support, it appears that women's participation in policy-making and control positions has generally decreased, while the increase in overall women administrators is primarily due to a large increase in the positions of personnel and support.

An examination of Table 3 underscores this line of thought. Note

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

that the percentage increase in men superintendents, principals, and supervisors (as well as librarians) is either greater than or equal to the percentage

TABLE 2

Administrative Positions by Sex
(Saint Louis Metropolitan Area: 1968-1976)

	1968			1976			Change		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
Superintendents	18	188	206	20	220	240	+2	+32	+34
Principals	118	596	714	74	713	787	-44	+117	+73
Supervisors	175	180	355	154	201	355	-21	+21	0
Librarians/Media Directors	182	20	202	309	48	357	+127	+28	+155
Guidance Counselors	206	253	459	372	300	672	+166	+47	+213
Pupil Personnel	39	13	52	374	80	454	+355	+67	+402
TOTAL	738	1432	2170	1303	1563	2865	+565	+130	+695

TABLE 3

Percentage Change in
Administrative Positions by Sex
(Saint Louis Metropolitan Area: 1968-1976)

	Women	Men	TOTAL
Superintendents	11	17	17
Principals	-37	20	10
Supervisors	-12	12	0
Librarians/Media Directors	70	140	78
Guidance Counselors	81	19	46
Pupil Personnel	860	515	773
TOTAL	77	9	32

increase of those categories in general (for total administrators). While these categories were either increasing or remaining stable, women's representation in them either decreased or increased at a lower rate then men's. Moreover, the increased number of women superintendents (2) actually represents a decrease in the percentage of superintendents who are women, as is shown in Table 4.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Returning to Table 3, it appears that in administrative positions with less decision-making and control power than superintendents, principals, and supervisors, women showed marked advances. Their percentage increases outstripped men (except for librarians); thus women counselors increased by 81% (to men's 19%) and women pupil personnel increased by 860% (to men's 515%).

While Table 3 examines the percentage of each sex in administrative categories (comparing 1976 to 1968), Table 4 presents another perspective. When women are viewed as a percentage of total administrators, we see that while there has been growth in their representation (11%), the growth has been in counselors and pupil personnel (10% and 7%), with decreases in the other four categories, ranging from -1% for superintendents through -8% for principals.

2) <u>What has been the change in women administrators' salaries</u>?

This question is difficult to investigate across school districts, as policies differ regarding variables such as years in the position, years in the district, level of education, merit increases, and similar factors. Consequently, the findings presented must be considered a broad,

TABLE 4

Women Administrators (and Salaries)
as a Percentage of Total Administrators
(and Total Administrators' Salaries):
Saint Louis Metropolitan Area: 1968-1976

	1968	1976	Change
Superintendents	9* (5)**	8 (7)	-1 (+2)
Principals	17 (16)	9 (9)	-8 (-7)
Supervisors	49 (47)	43 (40)	-6 (-7)
Librarians/Media Directors	90 (89)	86 (84)	-4 (-5)
Guidance Counselors	45 (44)	55 (52)	10 (+8)
Pupil Personnel	75 (74)	82 (75)	7 (+1)
TOTAL	34 (32)	45 (36)	11 (+4)

*Women superintendents expressed as a percentage of total superintendents; hence, 9% of all superintendents in 1968 were women.

**Women superintendents' salaries expressed as a percentage of total superintendents' salaries; hence, 5% of all salaries allocated for superintendents in 1968 went to women.

first stroke. Nonetheless, when the various administrative categories are viewed in terms of women's and men's salary differentials, several interesting phenomona arise.

To begin, Table 5 shows that there are different changes in the various categories for women and for men. With the exception of superintendents, men's changes in salaries have been larger than women's ($7,234 as opposed to $5,830). Also, the categories which effect the most women (librarians, counselors, and pupil personnel) had the smallest changes in salaries; thus pupil personnel administrators who were women, received a net increase in the eight-year study period of $819, yet accounted for roughly 30% of women administrators (374 out of 1303).

INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

Another perspective is presented in Table 6. When mean salaries are examined, the percentage change in men's salaries are (with the exception of superintendents) always larger than women's. While the change in women superintendents' salary is a dramatic 119% (compared to 55% for men superintendents), this effects relatively few women as there were only 20 women superintendents in 1976. The larger percentage changes for men in the categories of librarians (66% versus 54%), counselors (61% versus 50%), and pupil personnel (55% versus 9%) effects over 80% of women administrators, or more than 1,000 people.

INSERT TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE

Referring back to Table 4, the figures in parentheses show women

TABLE 5

Mean Salaries
of Administrators by Sex
(Saint Louis Metropolitan Area: 1968-1976)

	1968			1976			Change		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
Superintendents	10,278	16,931	16,350	22,516	26,297	25,982	12,238	9,366	9,632
Principals	13,340	13,408	13,397	19,991	21,715	21,553	6,651	8,307	8,156
Supervisors	11,095	12,006	11,557	16,712	19,166	18,102	5,617	7,160	6,545
Librarians/Media Directors	8,927	9,742	9,007	13,709	16,209	14,045	4,782	6,467	5,038
Guidance Counselors	9,837	10,063	9,962	14,712	16,184	15,369	4,875	6,121	5,407
Pupil Personnel	10,015	10,824	10,218	10,834	16,812	11,887	819	5,988	1,669
TOTAL	10,582	12,163	11,749	16,413	19,398	17,823	5,830	7,234	6,075

TABLE 6

Percentage Change in Mean Salaries
of Administrative Positions by Sex
(Saint Louis Metropolitan Area: 1968-1976)

	Women	Men	TOTAL
Superintendents	119	55	59
Principals	50	61	61
Supervisors	51	60	57
Librarians/Media Directors	54	66	56
Guidance Counselors	50	61	54
Pupil Personnel	9	55	16
TOTAL	55	59	51

administrators' salaries as a percentage of total administrative salaries. Women superintendents, principals, supervisors, and librarians show a decrease in percentages of salary accounted for; moreover, the increase in total women administrators' salaries (4%) is less than the increase in total women administrators (11%).

3) What is the relationship between women's participation in educational administration and school district growth?

The districts were divided into those which had higher enrollments in 1976 than in 1968, and those which had lower enrollments (none remained the same). A correlation coefficient was computed between this growth variable and the change in percentage of women administrators for that district. The coefficient ($r = .21$) suggests a weak positive relationship between growth in school district size and increasing percentages of women administrators. Related to this finding is the relationship between school district size and change in percentage of women administrators. In this case, school districts were grouped by size and a correlation coefficient computed as before; the coefficient ($r = -.14$) suggests a weak negative relationship.

Discussion

To begin, a series of caveats make it important to view these results with some care. For example, do districts which fluctuated in size differ from those which showed a steady change? Do elementary districts (or rural districts, or wealthy districts) differ from one another? Do patterns for assistant superintendents (or assistant principals) differ from superintendents and principals? A reanalysis of this data is currently

being planned which will deal with some of these types of questions; in addition, cohorts of men and women administrators will be identified in terms of characteristics such as years of experience.

Nonetheless, there are several interesting items suggested by these data. While the numbers and percentages of women administrators have increased, they must be interpreted in terms of specific categories. While the statistical limitations of this study have been discussed, the oft-mentioned problem for policy-makers of the potentially misleading nature of statistics needs to be repeated: the term "administrator" obscures as much as it illuminates, in that women have decreased administrative presence in policy-making and control despite overall increases in administration.

Regarding salaries, women administrators' salaries have not grown as quickly as have men's. Moreover, the mean earnings of women compared to men have actually decreased between 1968 and 1976 in certain positions.

The last point, regarding the influence of district growth and size upon women's representation in administration is less clear. The slight positive relationship between increases in percentage of women administrators and school growth suggests that growing districts are more likely to increase women's participation in administration. The slight negative relationship between school district size and increases in women's administrative presence suggests that larger districts are less likely to increase women administrators. However, neither of these relationships is strong.

Implications

What are we to make of these findings. In terms of generalizability,

the Saint Louis metropolitan area is of interest to other urban regions in that there is a declining urban core, inner suburbs (some in decline, some stable, and some growing), and marked exurban and rural growth. However, parallels must be drawn with care.

These findings suggest that women are not making headway in educational administration. Their increases are not in positions of organizational control; rather, school organizations appear to reflect the experience of business organizations where women's advancement tends to be in personnel/support functions (line) as opposed to policy-making/control functions (staff).

While this study does not tell us why this might be the case, there are several possibilities. Perhaps fewer men leave the profession and hence those remaining compete with women for positions formerly more accessible to women (possibly an "old boy" network is at work); alternately, it is likely that competent and experienced women leave education (or don't enter) for other fields, and these are women who previously would have secured superintendencies, principalships, or supervisory positions. Is it likely that these explanations account for the decreasing earning power of women administrators (relative to men)? Clearly, we need more information on these issues.

The press by women for increased access to administrative positions is taking place at a time when many districts are either declining or experiencing decreased growth in enrollment, and when turnover rates among school personnel are decreasing (Anderson and Mark, 1977). The slight positive correlation between growth and women's increases in administration might suggest an inference that in times of decline, women's percentage of administrative positions will likewise decline. However, this is posed as a speculation, and since decline is not likely to be a mirror image of

growth, these kinds of issues need more examination.

This study, then, asks more questions than it answers; that is an important outcome. It does appear that, in general, women are less likely to accrue the benefits of administrative expansion than are men and that women have declined in administrative presence in certain areas. These results should be of interest to school district planners, professional organizations and unions, patrons of school districts, civil rights organizations, and government agencies (such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission).

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